

PhD Position (f/m/d) – Insect Ecology

at the department of Animal Ecology and Tropical Biology (Zoology III), Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg, Germany.

The Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg invites applications for a PhD position (3 years, salary scale TV-L E13, 65%), starting 1st of December 2026, within the DFG-funded project "The heat is on: impacts of heatwaves on flower detection and visitation in insect pollinators".

Background: Heat waves increasingly threaten pollination services. Previous work has shown that heat stress impairs bumblebees' olfactory ability to detect floral scents, with limited recovery, potentially compromising foraging success and colony survival. This project extends that work to ask whether other pollinators — wild bees, butterflies, hoverflies — show similar vulnerabilities, and how heat waves affect foraging behaviour and pollination efficiency (pollen transfer, flower visitation).

Your Tasks

- Assess heat-stress vulnerability across multiple pollinator taxa
- Conduct behavioural assays on floral resource detection & foraging under heat stress
- Quantify effects on pollination efficiency via field and lab experiments
- Analyse and publish results; contribute to project management and supervision of student assistants

Your Profile

- Master's degree (or equivalent) in Biology, Ecology, Entomology, or related field
- Interest in insect physiology, behavioural ecology, and/or pollination biology
- Fieldwork/laboratory experience with insects desirable
- Willingness to work within an interdisciplinary and collaborative project
- Good statistical skills in R
- Fluent written and spoken English; German language skills an advantage

We Offer

- A 3-year position at 65% TV-L E13
- Integration into an active, international research group
- Access to field sites and laboratory infrastructure
- Support for professional development and doctoral training programs

Application: Please submit a CV, motivation letter, a short summary of your research interests, complete certificates and the contact information of two references — preferably as a single PDF file to "sabine.nooten@uni-wuerzburg.de" by October 15, 2026. Alternatively, you may also submit your application materials, but only as copies towards: Ms. Sabine Nooten, Chair of Zoology III, Am Hubland, 97074 Würzburg. For further information please contact Dr. Sabine Nooten, sabine.nooten@uni-wuerzburg.de

The University of Würzburg is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages qualified female candidates to apply. Applicants with disabilities will be given preference in case of equal qualification. We welcome applications regardless of gender, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

Please send copies of documents only. For cost reasons, application documents cannot be returned. Documents will be destroyed as soon as the selection procedure has been completed. If you enclose a postage-paid envelope, the application documents will be returned to you by three months after the end of the selection procedure.